DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 467 777 JC 020 579

AUTHOR	Straus, Maria; Daley, Jennifer
TITLE	Learning College Initiative: Implementing a Common Book at Your College.
INSTITUTION	Houston Community Coll. System, TX.
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	43p.; The majority of the appended conference program contains copyrighted material and is not available in the ERIC version.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Community Colleges; *Literature Appreciation; Program Implementation; *Reading Assignments; *Reading Programs; School Activities; Student Participation; *Supplementary Reading Materials; Teacher Participation; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*Houston Community College System TX

ABSTRACT

This paper outlines a large urban community college's first attempt at implementing a common book program, in which all members of a campus read a designated work of literature. An overview is provided of the first-year experience, along with ideas for overcoming obstacles, involving faculty and staff, and obtaining sponsors. The paper gives the following step-by-step guide for the establishment of common book program: (1) establish a program philosophy--for example, the common book enhances student/staff/faculty learning via the establishment of a true learning community and partnerships; (2) establish selection criteria (e.g., the book has clear ties to the college's mission and is appropriate for a wide variety of disciplines and classes); (3) determine the common book by requesting nominations, convening a selection committee, and distributing a ballot of final options; (4) announce the book selection; (5) implement the common book by soliciting faculty and department chair support for common book assignments and bookstore sponsorship; (6) celebrate the common book by hosting a celebration and planning conference that highlights the year's past achievements and provides an opportunity to finalize the next year's book selection; and (7) evaluate the project and the process through internal and external evaluations. The majority of the document is made up of the following appended materials: nomination forms; Top Five Ballot; Request for Proposals Form; Conference Announcement; Conference Welcoming Speech; sponsor correspondence letters; trustee correspondence letters; conference participant correspondence letters; conference summary; sample course syllabus; and the conference program. (Author/RC)

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ED 467 777

HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Houston Community College System
Educational Development Division
Learning College Initiatives

Title: **Learning College Initiative: Implementing a Common Book at Your College**

Authors: Straus, Maria and Daley, Jennifer

Abstract: Provides a look at the first experience at a large urban community college of implementing a Common Book into the various programs and across disciplines. Provides an overview from start to finish of the first year experience, along with ideas for overcoming obstacles, involving faculty and staff, and obtaining sponsors. This initiative is demonstrative of best practices in instruction, programming and institutional support.

Institutions of higher education survive and thrive by focusing on the future. That being said, one may still encounter resistance when attempting to initiate a new project. At best, a new project's first year is a learning experience. Such was the case at Houston Community College in Houston, Texas, where, in 2001, the Vice Chancellor for Educational Development, Dr. Charles M. Cook, decided to implement a Common Book into the curriculum. To get the project started, Dr. Cook looked at current trends of books that were being read across the country. Following his research, Dr. Cook met informally with various faculty members and determined that a good book to begin the initiative would be the American classic bestseller and Pulitzer Prize winning novel To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee. Soon after establishing the Office for Learning College Initiatives with Dr. Maria Straus in place as the initiative's coordinator, Dr. Cook brought his idea for the Common Book to the faculty at large. He and Dr. Straus met with the faculty at their annual fall conference to set forth a philosophy of the importance of having a Common Book. Following is a step-by-step guide for others who may wish to implement a Common Book at their college or university.

STEP ONE: Establish a Philosophy

Philosophy: Why should our college have a Common Book? A Common Book enhances student/faculty/staff learning by using the book as a vehicle for discussion. Students, faculty and staff become true learning partners, and learning communities can be set up using the Common Book as the center of the discussion and instruction. Students' voices are heard and considered for their contribution to the analysis and interpretation of the Common Book. The reasons for implementing a Common Book are:

- To provide a powerful means of personal contact and discussion among students, faculty and staff

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- To provide a link for all programs and disciplines
- To encourage successful student integration into college social and intellectual life
- To improve student recruitment and retention

"The whole idea of the Common Book is to promote learning communities to help students feel socially and academically integrated," explains Dr. Cook.

"A good book affects eternity. You can never tell where its influence stops. The Common Book embraces the principles of the Learning College, in which students and faculty are partners in the educational enterprise," states Dr. Straus.

STEP TWO: Establish Selection Criteria

It is essential to establish the criteria by which your Common Book will be selected. Following is the list of standards developed by Houston Community College to use when nominating and selecting the Common Book.

HCCS Common Book selection criteria
(Numbers 9 and 10 were added for 2003.)

1. It defines scholastic intellectual development for new students.
2. It has clear ties to the college's mission.
3. It is appropriate for a wide variety of disciplines and classes.
4. It is by a significant contemporary author who can visit campus.
5. It is not a book read in high school.
6. It is challenging but not overwhelming to entering first year students.
7. It provides potential hands on experiences or service learning.
8. It will sustain discussion for a year.
9. It is not a textbook.
10. It has not been one of the top five considered selections for the Common Book for at least three years.

STEP THREE: Determine the Common Book

Once the philosophy and selection criteria have been established, the next step is to determine an appropriate book to be used as the Common Book for the year. For the first year, the best approach may be, as at HCCS, an informal one, with more stringent guidelines being adopted for subsequent years' selections. It is very important to include representatives from all disciplines in the dialogue so as to ensure the selected book is one with universal acceptance.

During the first year of the Common Book at HCCS, the decision of which book to use was made by a relatively small group of department and discipline chairs.

The following year, for 2002, the request for nominations was widely disseminated. Dr. Cook sent an e-mail announcement to all staff and faculty requesting their nominations for the Common Book. You can expect to see a very lengthy and widely varied list of nominations for the Common Book. The following list of books nominated by HCCS staff and faculty for the 2002 Common Book will give you an idea of the many and diverse nominations you might expect to receive:

List of Nominated Books for 2002

- 10 Things I Wish I had Known Before I Went Out Into The World
- 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership
- A Confederacy of Dunces by John Kennedy Toole, 1981
- A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain by Robert Olen Butler, 1993
- A Summons to Memphis by Peter Taylor, 1987
- A Thousand Acres by Jane Smiley, 1992
- American Pastoral by Philip Roth, 1998
- Angle of Repose by Wallace Stegner, 1972
- Anything by Tony Robbins
- Beloved by Toni Morrison, 1988
- Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions Among the Converted Peoples by V. S. Naipaul
- Breathing Lessons by Anne Tyler, 1989
- Collected Stories by Jean Stafford, 1970
- Collected Stories by Katherine Anne Porter, 1966
- Elbow Room by James Alan McPherson, 1978
- Foreign Affairs by Alison Lurie, 1985
- House Made of Dawn by M. Scott Momaday
- Humboldt's Gift by Saul Bellow, 1976
- If Nights CouldTalk by Marsha Recknagel
- Independence Day by Richard Ford, 1996
- Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahiri, 2000
- Ironweed by William Kennedy, 1984
- Katherine Graham's Autobiography
- Lonesome Dove by Larry McMurtry, 1986
- Longitude by Dava Sobel
- Martin Dressler: The Tale of an American Dreamer by Steven Millhauser, 1997
- Rabbit at Rest by John Updike, 1991
- Rabbit is Rich by John Updike, 1982
- Rich Dad Poor Dad: What the Rich Teach Their Kids about Money that the Poor and Middle Class Do Not by Robert T. Kiyosaki and Sharon L. Lechter
- The 80/20 Principle
- The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay by Michael Chabon, 2001
- The Art of War (as it Relates to Management)
- The Color Purple by Alice Walker, 1983
- The Confessions of Nat Turner by William Styron, 1968
- The Executioner's Song by Norman Mailer, 1980
- The Fixer by Bernard Malamud, 1967
- The Hours by Michael Cunningham, 1999
- The Keepers of the House by Shirley Ann Grau, 1965
- The Killer Angels by Michael Shaara, 1975
- The Lexus and the Olive Tree
- The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love by Oscar Hijuelos, 1990
- The Millionaire Next Door
- The Optimist's Daughter by Eudora Welty, 1973
- The Shipping News by E. Annie Proulx, 1994
- The Stone Diaries by Carol Shields, 1995
- The Stories of John Cheever by John Cheever, 1979
- The Tao Te Ching by Lao-Tzu
- Who Moved My Cheese?

To ensure that everyone who wishes to do so is able to make a nomination, it is necessary to establish a nomination submission deadline that allows sufficient time and opportunity for reflection and discussion. A variety of ways for individuals or departments to easily submit their nominations should be provided

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(FAX, e-mail, regular mail, telephone, open forums, etc.). The deadline and contact information should be included in each request for nominations. These requests should be widely disseminated throughout the institution in as many venues as possible.

At HCCS, after the deadline for nominations has passed and the list of nominations is completed, the Coordinator for Learning College Initiatives pulls together a "Blue Ribbon Committee" to narrow the list to the top five. The members of the committee are also encouraged to add their own preferred titles to the list. If possible, this meeting should take place during the summer before the fall semester begins. At the latest, it needs to happen very early in the fall semester. The HCCS Blue Ribbon Committee is composed of representatives from various disciplines and departments. In addition to receiving input from English discipline faculty, which is critical to the success of the Common Book, it is also important to include insights from as many additional disciplines and departments as possible. The committee utilizes the list of established criteria to make the final selections.

Once the selection committee has narrowed down the list, the ballot with the final nominations should once again be widely distributed. HCCS used the occasion of the first Common Book Conference during November 2001, to distribute ballots to conference participants and attendees. Ballots should also be sent to all staff and faculty via e-mail and campus mail and made available in the libraries and bookstores. (A copy of the Common Book nomination form and the 2002 Common Book top-five ballot can be found in the Appendix.)

STEP FOUR: Announce the Common Book Selection

Once all of the ballots have been counted, the Common Book selection can be announced. This announcement should be widespread, utilizing all avenues of communication available – e-mail, department newsletters, newspapers, posters, etc.

Following are some examples of the announcements HCCS used to publicize its 2002 Common Book selection:

1.
The Houston mayoral election wasn't the only nail-biting competition that just ended. The votes have also all been cast and counted for the 2002 HCCS Common Book. It was a very close race between the top two contenders with only three votes deciding the winner. If Nights Could Talk, a family memoir by local author Marsha Recknagel narrowly beat out the Tao Te Ching, a classic manual on the art of living translated by Stephen Mitchell. Three other titles were also considered: Longitude by Dava Sovel, Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions Among the Converted People by V.S. Naipaul and Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahari. The final vote count was as follows:

If Nights Could Talk – 32
The Tao Te Ching – 29
Longitude – 23
Beyond Belief – 16
Interpreter of Maladies – 8

Thanks to everyone who participated by voting. Watch for more news about the HCCS Common Book, including information about when and where it will be available and ideas for incorporating the book into your course syllabus and integrating it into student activities.

2.

Over 100 votes were cast for the 2002 HCCS Common Book and the winner is Marsha Recknagel's If Nights Could Talk. The idea of a Common Book was born during HCCS discussions about improving student recruitment and retention.

HCCS, as a large, complex and multicultural urban institution, has few strands that effectively link all of us as individual participants in a Learning College. A review of the literature and research on student retention demonstrates that those students able to integrate successfully into the social and intellectual life of a college are the ones most likely to persist. Research further demonstrates that such integration is best facilitated for students by personal contacts with other students and with faculty and staff.

It is our hope that the Common Book provides one powerful means of personal contact and discussion for everyone at HCCS. Nothing provides a better "ice-breaker" to start a conversation than to ask "Read any good books lately?" and then to tell or hear of new discovery and excitement in having read one.

As with this year, we will ask all faculty to use the Common Book next spring in classes as applicable and next fall we'll showcase exceptional and creative examples of how that was done. More information on the Common Book will be available at our Faculty Conference on January 4, 2002 at Central College. Several copies of the book will be offered that day as door prizes for faculty participants.

STEP FIVE: Implement the Common Book

Faculty and staff should be encouraged to promote and implement the Common Book. Some ideas to help get the word out:

- Infuse information into discipline meetings
- Put information on back of class schedule
- Put information on web pages – link to research site
- Promote online research sites
- Put winning essays and projects on college web site and in student newspaper

Ideally, the Discipline and Department Chairs will encourage their faculty to include assignments relative to the Common Book on their course syllabi. (An example of a syllabus for an English course that includes the Common Book can be found in the Appendix.)

Sponsors can help to ensure a successful conference. Barnes & Noble is the contracted campus bookstore at HCCS, so it was a natural fit for them to serve as sponsors of the Common Book initiative as well as the conference. The bookstore provided over 100 copies of If Nights Could Talk, the 2003 selection, for distribution at the conference, for circulation at campus libraries, and for presentation to faculty who planned to use the book in their courses. Additionally, the bookstore provided lunches for all of the conference participants. (Copies of the letters seeking sponsorship and thanking the bookstore for its generosity are included in the Appendix.)

A successful conference is much more likely if everyone at the institution, from the Board of Trustees and upper administrators on down, is invited and encouraged to participate. All Trustees, Chancellor, Vice Chancellors, Presidents, Deans, etc. should be invited and urged to encourage their staff and faculty to attend and to bring their students. Public Information and website personnel should also be brought onboard to assist with information dissemination. (A copy of the letter of invitation sent to the Board of Trustees is included in the Appendix.)

STEP SIX: Celebrate the Common Book

Once the academic year has ended and a new one has begun, it is time to celebrate the culmination of the year's Common Book activities and to begin work on implementing a new Common Book. HCCS utilizes a Fall *Celebrating the Common Book* Conference as a venue for reflection, celebration, and anticipation. A standing Conference Planning Committee should be established early in the implementation process.

The conference serves as a showcase for the Common Book activities conducted by faculty and students throughout the course of the year. Additionally, it launches the final phase in determining the coming year's Common Book by allowing conference participants to vote for their choice of finalists for the selected book. (The conference program for the 2002 *Celebrating the Common Book* Conference is included in the Appendix.)

Individuals and groups who wish to participate by presenting at the conference should be given sufficient time and opportunity to prepare their presentations. At HCCS, forms for Request for Proposals (RFPs) are made available electronically via e-mail and website and distributed as hard copies at faculty conferences. Once all proposals have been received, the Conference Planning Committee can begin to shape the actual conference program. (The 2001 RFP form is included in the Appendix.)

During the conference participants and attendees are given a chance to provide input about the next year's Common Book selection and the conference logistics. Prior to and during the conference, faculty members are given opportunities to nominate books for the coming year. (A copy of the 2001 conference program is included in the Appendix.)

At the beginning of the fall semester, nomination forms should be widely distributed, both electronically and by hard copy, at the fall faculty conference. Nomination information is also disseminated via System-wide e-mail. The process, as detailed in Step Three, then begins again.

STEP SEVEN: Evaluate the Project and the Process

One of the most important, yet often overlooked, tools for successful program implementation and longevity is that of evaluation. AT HCCS, both internal and external evaluations are sought. Internal: Learning College Initiatives staff continuously evaluates the process and seeks program improvement input and opportunities. External: Conference participants (presenters and attendees) are asked to complete and submit a brief questionnaire designed to evaluate their perception of the actual conference. Participants are also asked to provide input about venues and dates for the following year's conference. (Copies of the conference evaluation form and the request for input form are included in the Appendix.)

CONCLUSION:

This step-by-step guide is being prepared as HCCS is planning for its second *Celebrating the Common Book* Conference. We have reserved the space for the conference and we have sent out notices to the faculty. The nomination form for the 2003 Common Book has been added to the Educational Development/Learning College Initiatives web page and will be distributed at the Fall Faculty Conference. Conversations among colleagues now often center on what books people are reading, as individuals speculate about which titles might make it to the Top Five list.

Overall, implementing the Common Book has been a rewarding experience. As was hoped, the Common Book is providing a powerful means of personal contact and discussion among students, faculty and staff. It provides a link for all programs and disciplines and encourages successful student integration into college social and intellectual life. Most importantly, the Common Book improves student recruitment and retention as students and faculty become true learning partners, and learning communities are established using the Common Book as the center of discussion and instruction.

For current HCCS Common Book information, access the following web address: http://databaseserver2.hccs.cc.tx.us/learning5/connections.html

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Learning College Initiatives

COMMON BOOK NOMINATION

Title of Book: _____

Author: _____

Brief Description of Book's Theme: _____

_____

_____

_____

Rationale for Nomination: _____

_____

_____

How might this book be used across various disciplines? _____

_____

_____

Person making this nomination: _____

Contact Information
Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

FAX: _____ Mail Code: _____ Campus: _____

Houston Community College System
Educational Development Division
3100 Main Street, P.O. Box 77266-7517
Houston, Texas 77266-7517
713/718-5192, 713/718-5190, FAX: 713/718-5018

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Nominations for the 2002 Common Book

Please indicate your preferred choice for the 2002 HCCS Common Book by checking ONE of the boxes beside the selected titles listed below.

☐ **Interpreter of Maladies** by Jhumpa Lahiri. Lahiri offers a collection of short stories on marriages (arranged, rushed into, betrayed, invaded, and exhausted) with characters who move between the Indian subcontinent and the United States. They date, vacation, emigrate and work across cultural and national borders. Lahiri's well-constructed plots and characters offer the reader insight into the ways that human affections both sustain and defy the cultural forms that try to enclose them.

☐ **The Tao Te Ching** by Lao-Tzu (translated by Stephen Mitchell). The Tao Te Ching, or Book of the Way, is the classic manual on the art of living. Written over 2,500 years ago, the Tao Te Ching looks at the basic predicament of being alive and gives advice that imparts balance and perspective, a serene and generous spirit. This book is about wisdom in action. It teaches how to work for the good with the effortless skill that comes from being in accord with the Tao (the basic principle of the universe) and applies equally to good government, love, child rearing, business, and ecology.

☐ **Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions Among the Converted Peoples** by V. S. Naipaul. The winner of this year's Nobel Prize for Literature, Naipaul retraces a journey he first took in 1979 through Indonesia, Iran, Pakistan and Malaya. Then he was trying to understand the fundamentalism that seemed to be sweeping the region. Today, he is asking what happens when fundamentalism fails and when its dreams of purity encounter global economic change. Naipaul's book is one of stories, not of argument.

☐ **If Nights Could Talk** by Marsha Recknagel. A creative writing teacher at Rice University, Recknagel begins this family memoir with the arrival on her doorstep of her 16-year-old nephew, an emotional and physical wreck. He is the catalyst of an engaging reexamination of what they have both endured in their lives and how they went about redirecting those lives. Filled with references to Houston and a few to HCCS, this is a book about families, about love and meanness, about evil and redemption.

☐ **Longitude** by Dava Sobel. The thorniest scientific problem of the eighteenth century was how to determine longitude. Many thousands of lives had been lost at sea over the centuries due to the inability to determine an east-west position. This is the engrossing story of the clockmaker, John Harrison, who solved the problem that Newton and Galileo had failed to conquer, yet claimed only half the promised rich reward. The author launches us through the tumult of history and science as merchants, monarchs and mariners wrestle with measuring longitude.

Houston Community College System
Educational Development Division
Learning College Initiatives

Celebrating the Common Book

Fostering a Sense of Community

To Kill a Mockingbird

By Harper Lee

The timeless classic of growing up and the human dignity that unites us all.

A Learning College Initiative

Conference
November 9, 2001
12 – 3 p.m.
HCC-Southwest, West Loop Auditorium

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Deadline for Submissions: October 31, 2001

PRESENTER(S)

The first presenter is the principal contact and is responsible for coordinating, managing, and facilitating the presentation. Up to two additional presenters can participate in the presentation.

Principal contact: Name: _____ College: _____

Title/Position: _____ Department: _____

Mail Code: _____ Phone: _____

FAX: _____ E-Mail: _____

Co-presenter 1: Name: _____ College: _____

Title/Position: _____ Department: _____

Mail Code: _____ Phone: _____

FAX: _____ E-Mail: _____

Co-presenter 2: Name: _____ College: _____

Title/Position: _____ Department: _____

Mail Code: _____ Phone: _____

FAX: _____ E-Mail: _____

Equipment needed for presentation: _____

_____

Technical Support needed for presentation: _____

_____

Pre-conference Support needed for presentation: (e.g., copies of handouts): _____

_____

PROPOSAL

Title of Presentation. Approximately 10 words. The title should be attention getting and should accurately describe your session.

Description. Approximately 50 words that will be used in the conference program to tell attendees succinctly, persuasively, and accurately what to expect from your session. We are looking for innovative practices, new ideas, learning-centered content, and active learning opportunities.

Presentation Plan. Provide a brief overview of your proposed activities, visual aids, and handouts. Describe how you plan to ensure audience involvement. Traditional lecture-only presentations are strongly discouraged.

THE COMMON BOOK AT HCCS

The First Annual HCCS Celebrating the Common Book Conference will be held on Friday, November 9, 2001, at the West Loop Center. The 2001 HCCS Common Book is To Kill a Mockingbird, the Pulitzer Prize winning classic novel by Harper Lee. Faculty nominated and voted on the book, which will be used throughout the fall semester. Faculty were encouraged to select a book that would be "common" for students to read regardless of their major or subject area of study. Faculty has been using the book in courses, and campuses are using it in extracurricular activities. A student essay contest is planned, with winners receiving scholarship prizes.

"The whole idea (of the Common Book)," explains Dr. Charles M. Cook, Vice Chancellor, Educational Development, "is to promote learning communities to help students feel socially and academically integrated."

All HCCS students and faculty are encouraged to participate in the November 9 academic conference, at which a new Common Book for 2002 will be announced. The event will be held from 12 to 3 p.m. in the West Loop Center Auditorium, 5601 West Loop South. For additional information, call 713/718-5192 or 713/718-5190.

To Kill a Mockingbird

Harper Lee

The unforgettable novel of a childhood in a sleepy Southern town and the crisis of conscience that rocked it, ***To Kill a Mockingbird*** *became both an instant bestseller and a critical success when it was first published in 1960. It went on to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1961 and was later made into an Academy Award-winning film, also a classic.*

Compassionate, dramatic, and deeply moving, ***To Kill a Mockingbird*** *takes readers to the roots of human behavior – to innocence and experience, kindness and cruelty, love and hatred, humor and pathos. Now with over 15 million copies in print and translated into forty languages, this regional story by a young Alabama woman claims universal appeal. Harper Lee always considered her book to be a simple love story. Today it is regarded as a masterpiece of American literature.*

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CONFERENCE WELCOME

Welcome. Today is a celebration of reading and in particular, the reading of our HCCS common book for 2001, *To Kill a Mockingbird.* Today you will hear how several faculty and students have utilized this book to contribute to their learning and dialogues with one another.

The idea of a common book was born in our discussions about improving student recruitment and retention. HCCS, as a large, very complex and very multicultural urban institution, has few strands that effectively link all of us together as students, faculty, staff, administrators, trustees, and community members. We all too often labor independently in our own offices, our own classrooms, our own departments or programs, without fully recognizing that we are but a piece of the larger whole that we wish HCCS to be as a Learning College.

When our committee last year reviewed the latest literature and research on student retention, it was very apparent that those students who persist are those who are able to integrate successfully into the social and intellectual life of a college. Those unable or unwilling to do so are those most likely to leave. An absence of integration may result from a students' sense of "incongruence" or mismatch between their own personal and institutional expectations, but more often simply from a student's sense of isolation.

The research demonstrates that the degree and quality of personal interactions with other students, faculty, and staff are critical for student persistence. Indeed, the absence of sufficient contact with other members of the institution proves to be the single most important predictor of eventual departure, even after controlling for effects of background, personality, and academic performance. In other words, students are more likely to leave because of what happens after they enroll, not what took place prior to entry. And of that which occurs after entry, the absence of contact with others proves to matter most.

It is our hope that the Common Book provides one means of contact. Nothing provides a better "ice-breaker" to start a conversation than to ask "Read any good books lately?" and then to tell or hear of new discovery and excitement in having read one. Reading is learning. Reading is travel to distant lands and understanding different peoples. Reading is finding your soul, your love, and your path in life.

Recently, Academic Dean Cheryl Peters from Central College and I stopped in a hallway and of course asked "Read any good books lately?" Cheryl shared with me a fantastic book that is one of our nominees for next year's Common Book, If Nights Could Talk. She loaned it to me and it provided me a powerful sense of healing after the Sept. 11 disaster. It was a precious gift for which I'll always thank a good friend.

We took the nominations for the common book for 2002 and asked a faculty panel to narrow the list to five choices. The list and descriptions of the five choices are available for you to vote on today - leave your ballot at our registration desk. As with this year, we will ask faculty to use the common book next spring in their classes and next fall we'll showcase how that was done. Thanks again for joining us today and have fun celebrating our common enterprise of learning.

TO: Julie Bourlier, HCCS Bookstore Manager

FROM: Maria Straus, Learning College Coordinator
Jennifer Daley, Student Services Specialist

DATE: August 27, 2001

SUBJECT: Common Book Conference Sponsor

On November 9, 2001, HCCS will present its first annual Celebrating the Common Book Conference. This student-faculty conference will feature speakers, presentations, and a panel discussion focusing on the 2001 HCCS Common Book, To Kill a Mockingbird. We expect this annual book 'festival' to grow and to become an integral component of many HCCS academic and workforce program's curriculum. In order to ensure the continued success of the conference, we'd like to provide participants with copies of the 2002 HCCS Common Book. We hope that you, as the manager of the HCCS Bookstores, will agree that this is an important venture. If so, we would like to request that the Bookstore serve as an official sponsor of the event by providing $2,000 to be used to purchase copies of the 2002 Common Book and other related materials. We will, of course, publicize the bookstore's sponsorship. Attached is information about the conference, which we hope you will find useful. Please let us know if you need additional information. We'll be happy to meet with you to discuss this in further detail. Please contact us at 713/718-5190 (Jennifer) or 713/718-5192 (Maria). We look forward to hearing from you soon.

November 15, 2001

Ms. Julie Bourlier
HCCS Bookstore
1300 Holman
Houston TX
Mail Code 1229

Dear Julie,

We'd like to thank you and Barnes & Noble for your generosity in sponsoring the Common Book Conference on Nov. 9. Your donation of refreshments during the conference helped to make this first annual event a truly memorable one. Additionally, your commitment to continue your support by offering complimentary copies of the 2002 Common Book, which will be announced on Dec. 3, helps to ensure the continued success of this Learning College initiative.

Cordially,

Maria Straus, Ed.D.
Coordinator, Learning College Initiatives

Jennifer Daley
Student Services Specialist

November 5, 2001

Dr. Michael P. Williams
Trustee, Houston Community College System
3100 Main Street
Houston, Texas 77004

Dear Dr. Williams,

You are cordially invited to attend the **2001 Celebrating the Common Book Conference,** which will be held on **Friday, November 9, 2001, 12 noon until 2 p.m.** This is the first year that Houston Community College System will present this academic conference, which will be held at the **HCC-Southwest College West Loop Center auditorium, 5601 West Loop South.**

To Kill a Mockingbird, the 1961 Pulitzer Prize winning novel by Harper Lee and the HCCS 2001 Common Book, will be the focus of the conference. All students, faculty, staff, and members of the community are invited and encouraged to attend. Refreshments will be served, courtesy of Barnes & Noble HCCS Bookstores, sponsor of the conference.

The program agenda will be as follows:

Welcome 12 noon	***Dr. Charles Cook***
Vocal Performance	***Dr. Allyson Applebaum & HCC-NW College Choir***
Student Presentation	***Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society***
Psychology Student Presentation	***Psi Beta Honor Society***

Interdisciplinary Panel Discussion followed by Question and Answer Period

Adjournment 2 p.m.

We hope that you will be able to join us for this very special inaugural event. If you'd like additional information, please feel free to contact me at 713/718-5192.

Sincere regards,

Maria Straus, Ed.D.
Coordinator, Learning College Initiatives
Educational Development Division

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Learning College Initiatives

TO: Bruce Austin
HCCS Board of Trustees

FROM: Charles M. Cook
Vice Chancellor, Educational Development
Maria Straus
Coordinator, Learning College Initiatives

DATE: January 7, 2002

Please accept this copy of "If Nights Could talk" by Marsha Recknagel, the 2002 HCCS Common Book. The idea of a Common Book was born during HCCS discussions about improving student recruitment and retention.

HCCS, as a large, complex and multicultural urban institution, has few strands that effectively link all of us as individual participants in a Learning College. A review of the literature and research on student retention demonstrates that those students able to integrate successfully into the social and intellectual life of a college are the ones most likely to persist. Research further demonstrates that such integration is best facilitated for students by personal contacts with other students and with faculty and staff.

It is our hope that the Common Book provides one powerful means of personal contact and discussion for everyone at HCCS. Nothing provides a better "ice-breaker" to start a conversation than to ask "Read any good books lately?" and then to tell or hear of new discovery and excitement in having read one.

We have requested that all faculty use the Common Book in their classes as applicable, and in the fall, we'll showcase exceptional and creative examples of how that was done.

November 15, 2001

Dr. Allyson Applebaum
Northwest - Town & Country Square Center
1060 W. Sam Houston Pkwy. N.
Houston, TX 77043
MC 1379

Dear Allyson,

We'd like to thank you for the wonderfully moving production directed by you and presented by the HCC-Northwest College Choir during the Common Book Conference on Nov. 9. The presentation, *Musical Reflections on Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird*, helped to make this first annual event a truly memorable one. We're also most appreciative of your insightful contributions as a member of the Interdisciplinary Panel. We look forward to your continued interest in and support of next year's Common Book, which will be announced on Dec. 3.

Cordially,

Maria Straus, Ed.D.
Coordinator, Learning College Initiatives

Jennifer Daley
Student Services Specialist

Learning College Initiatives

ANNOUNCING THE 2002 HCCS COMMON BOOK CONFERENCE
FALL 2002

Your input is needed!

We're planning the 2002 Celebrating the Common Book Conference, and we need your input. Please provide your suggestions for the following so that we can present an innovative and educational Common Book Conference for all students and faculty to experience and enjoy.

Facility/Location _____

Month _____

Day of the Week _____

Time of Day _____

Celebrating the Common Book Conference

Choices in the Maze

Fall 2002

If Nights Could Talk: A Family Memoir

By Marsha Recknagel

A creative writing teacher at Rice University, Recknagel begins this family memoir with the arrival on her doorstep of her 16-year-old nephew, an emotional and physical wreck. He is the catalyst of an engaging reexamination of what they have both endured in their lives and how they went about redirecting those lives. Filled with references to Houston and a few to HCCS, this is a book about families, about love and meanness, about evil and redemption.

HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

3100 Main Street, 12th Floor, Mail Code 1112
Houston, Texas 77002
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HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

2001 Celebrating the Common Book Conference

November 9, 2001

Houston Community College System

HCC-SW West Loop Center

EVALUATION

Please rate by circling the number next to each of the following:

4=Excellent 3=Good 2=Fair 1=Poor

	4=Excellent	*3=Good*	*2=Fair*	*1=Poor*
	4	**3**	**2**	**1**
• Rate your overall perception of the conference.	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
• Rate the quality of the conference presentations.	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
• Rate the quality of the conference materials in contributing to your knowledge base.	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
• Rate the location and facility accommodations.	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
• Rate the quality of refreshments.	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
• Rate the pre-conference publicity.	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
• Rate the quality and amount of student involvement.	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
• Rate the quality and amount of faculty involvement.	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
• Rate the length of the conference.	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**

What did you gain from participating in this conference and how will you use this knowledge? _____

Conference Strengths: _____

Conference Weaknesses: _____

Presentation you enjoyed most: _____

Suggestions for the 2002 Celebrating the Common Book Conference:

- Facility/Location: _____
- Month: _____ Day of the Week: _____ Time of Day: _____

Additional Comments:

HCCS Common Book Conference a Success

An overwhelming majority of those attending the 2001 HCCS Celebrating the Common Book Conference, held last Friday, Nov. 9, at HCC-SW West Loop Center, evaluated the conference as excellent or good. High evaluations were given to the facility, to faculty involvement, and to the conference presentations in general. Over 50 students, staff and faculty attended the event, which featured presentations by the HCC-Northwest College Choir, Psi Beta and Phi Theta Kappa honor societies, and an interdisciplinary panel of HCCS faculty. HCCS Barnes & Noble Bookstores provided the refreshments.

The conference, a Learning College Initiative, was the first of what is to become an annual event at Houston Community College System. Dr. Maria Straus, Coordinator of HCCS Learning College Initiatives, reflected upon the conference and its celebrated book, To Kill a Mockingbird, the 1961 Pulitzer Prize winning novel by Harper Lee: "A good book affects eternity. You can never tell where its influence stops," said Straus. "I think Harper Lee did touch many lives, and we were part of this enduring significance. The Common Book Conference is a forum whereby learning is celebrated. It embraces the principles of the Learning College, in which students and faculty are partners in the educational enterprise."

Votes for one of five nominated books to be the 2002 HCCS Common Book will be accepted through November 30. For additional information or to receive a ballot, send an e-mail to daley_j or straus_m.

Houston Community College System
COURSE SYLLABUS AND GUIDELINES

nstructor: Helen Orman, Office Scarcella E120A, Phone 713 718-7816 Stafford 112B

:RN: 40933 MW 9:30-11 a.m.

English 2336: Introduction to Multicultural Literature
(Special Focus on Life Stories, Personal Memoir)

Catalog Description

A survey of multicultural literature written by a diverse group of writers. Students will read selections from fiction, nonfiction, poetry, with most emphasis on nonfiction autobiographical writing, and will analyze these works through class discussions and written assignments. 3 credit. (3 lecture).

Course Purpose

English 2336 will introduce students to a broad sampling of writers from various cultural backgrounds. This special section will explore various threads of autobiographical writing from different traditions around the world and then focus especially on writers with diverse cultural backgrounds within contemporary literature. Our reading and writing will emphasize appreciation and understanding of the diversity of human cultural heritage and examine what is common to the human experience. Students will learn to analyze literature through reading, class discussion, and written discourse. In addition students will have an opportunity to write about their own or their family's lives and develop an appreciation for how their own stories fit into the greater human tradition of which we are all part.

Description of Course Content

The special focus personal memoir / multicultural literature course surveys life stories by writers from various nations and ethnic and cultural groups. Works by African, European, African-American, Asian-American, European-American, Native-American, and Hispanic-American writers are included. Representative authors include St. Augustine, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, Walt Whitman, Marcel Proust, James Baldwin, Vladimir Nabokov, Maxine Hong Kingston, Jamaica Kincaid, Mary Oliver, N. Scott Momaday, Patricia Hampl, Michael Ondaatje, Sharon Olds, Frank McCourt, Alice Walker, and Richard Rodriguez.

Required Textbooks:

One book length memoir from list of options distributed the first day of class.

McConkey, James. *The Anatomy of Memory*: An Anthology. New York, Oxford University Press, 1996.

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Optional Texts / Handbooks on Writing About Literature:

The following supplemental texts have been approved by the English Discipline Committee. Students should await the recommendation of their instructor as to which of these texts to purchase, as one may be emphasized in a particular instructor's class.

Griffith, Kelley. *Writing Essays About Literature: A Guide and Style Sheet.* 5th ed. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1998.

Lynn, Steven. *Texts and Contexts: Writing About Literature With Critical Theory.* 2nd. ed. New York: Longman, 1998.

Meyer, Michael. *Thinking and Writing About Literature.* Boston: Bedford, 1995.

Objectives and Requirements:

By the end of the semester the student who passes with a final grade of "C" or above will have demonstrated the ability to:

1. Complete and comprehend reading assignments. Assignments vary in length, but a typical assignment requires 2 hours out of class for each hour in class (e.g. 2 1/2 to 3 hours reading to prepare for a 1 1/2 hour class session).

2. Attend class regularly, missing no more than 12.5% (6 hours) of instruction.

3. Participate in small group and/or class discussions in which assigned literary works are analyzed and interpreted.

4. Compare and contrast literary works on the basis of appropriate literary components (structure, language, theme, character, setting, symbol).

5. Write at least 5,000 words in completing written assignments of varying lengths which are relevant to course content. At least one assignment will include information gained through research, and one assignment must be at least 1,500 or more words in length.

6. Maintain an average of 70 or above on written assignments and tests.

CLASS POLICIES:

I. 1. Please do not be late for class. Nine-thirty is not all that early!

II. 2. After the fourth class absence, an administrative withdrawal may be made, according to HCCS policy.

III. 3. I will drop your lowest quiz grade, but no make-up quizzes are given, so an absence on a quiz day would automatically become your dropped grade. The quizzes are always based on the literature, not the historical background reading.

IV. 4. Please type all out-of-class essays.

V. 5. All papers are due in class on the date assigned. Ten points per calendar day may be deducted from the final grade of late papers.

VI. 6. Keep a copy of the final draft of each essay submitted.

VII. 7. If the class elects to do a collaborative presentation, keep the names and phone numbers of your presentation group, and ask one of your group-mates to pick up your copy of any handout you miss because of absence or lateness. Your group is also a good source of notes on class lecture and discussion for missed classes (though in the best of all possible worlds, I'd like each of you to be here for every class!). If we don't do a

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collaborative group presentation, get the name and number of a classmate for exchange of information. We will discuss other interesting options, including establishment of a list serve, the first day of class.

8. If you are having problems of any kind in this class, please talk with me. I am always willing and indeed happy to work with you.

GRADING STANDARDS:

A (90-100)	=	Exceptionally fine work: superior in mechanics, style, and content
B (80-89)	=	Above average work: superior in one or two areas—mechanics, style, content
C (70-79)	=	Average quality work: good, unexceptional
D (60-69)	=	Below average work: noticeably weak in mechanics, style, or content
F (0-59)	=	Failing work: clearly deficient in mechanics, style, and content

Evidence of plagiarism will result in a grade of "F."

SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY: According to the *Student Handbook* for the Houston Community College System, scholastic dishonesty includes **cheating on a test**, **plagiarism,** and **collusion**:

- **cheating on a test** – copying from someone else's paper or using unauthorized materials during a test;
- **plagiarism** -- using another person's words, information, or ideas in your own written work without appropriate acknowledgement (and quotation marks when exact words are used);
- **collusion** – "unauthorized collaboration" (35).

Please note the possible consequences of such dishonesty, as stated in the 1993-94 *Student Handbook*: "Possible punishments for academic dishonesty may include a grade of 0 or F for the particular assignment, failure in the course, and/or recommendation for probation or dismissal from the College System" (35).

Written Assignments and Grading

Short (literary analysis) essay #1	10%
Short (literary analysis) essay #2, incorporating research	15%
Personal narrative #1	10%
Personal narrative #2	10%
Journals	20%
Class presentation or short essay 3 on book-length memoir	15%
Daily grades based on participation and occasional unannounced quizzes	5%
Final exam	15%

INSTRUCTOR CONFERENCES:
I am not only willing but delighted to consult with you on any questions you have on our reading or your papers. I will be available for conferences in my office (Room 120A, in the Scarcella Science and Technology Building) Mondays and Wednesdays after our class (11:00 till about 2:00 and often till 4 or 5) and 9 till 2 Tuesdays and Thursdays, and 10-12 Fridays, except for time out for lunch and occasional meetings). If you need to see me at another time, ask and we'll work something out. You may also call me if you have a problem that can't wait till before or after the next class. E-mail me at orman_h@hccs.cc.tx.us (this form of contact works especially well when you want to run a piece of writing by me for comment).

The Writer's Journal in ENGL 2336 Personal Memoir

Please write at least 12 journal entries, half of them in response to the assigned memoir readings, half of them devoted to exploring your own memoir material. For both types of writing, I will be offering writing prompts and suggestions throughout the semester.

Each journal entry should be double-spaced and fill one page or more. Your journal entries should be kept in a folder or notebook section devoted exclusively to journal writing. Computer-generated or typed journals are encouraged, but neat, legible handwritten work will also be accepted. Write on one side of the page only.

Your journal will be evaluated for both quantity and quality of responses. Successful journals will record your personal reactions to and reflections about our reading assignments, and what you judge to be your most sustained and interesting efforts in writing about your own memories or about the lives or experiences of family members or friends. Your journal may include experimental work and exploratory writing ideas. Feel free to include additional material: poems, drawings, short short stories, and any other creative response you are inspired to add.

Another aspect of your journal is its purpose to facilitate class discussion. Please bring your journal to class regularly, and be prepared to share a short passage, particularly when you have written a response to the writing we are discussing on that class day.

The journal will be graded at the midpoint in the semester and again the last week. You are encouraged to write spontaneously and without criticism or self-doubt. The journal will not be graded for spelling, sentence errors, etc., but rather for content, creativity, and/or thoroughness. The more insightful your comments are about the readings, the more coherent and compelling your own memoir writing is, the better.

The A journal (90-100) goes beyond the requirements in either number of entries or length of entries or both. The writing demonstrates your freedom of expression and originality and/or your serious thought about the work. The entries show a variety of writing styles. The entries are courageous, reflecting your own interpretations, your own commitment to this exploration of the personal memoir genre. The A journal is a rich source of ideas for future writing or class discussion. The A journal is excellent.

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The B journal (80-89) has the required number of entries of the required length. Although the entries are interesting and thoughtful, they lack the depth of analysis or creativity of the A journal. They lack the A journal's commitment to going beyond the requirement. These entries exhibit less experimentation with language and thinking than the A journal, but the B journal is good.

The C journal (70-79) may have less than the required number of entries. In any case, the entries reflect little creativity or analytical effort. Entries are predictable or incomplete and barely fulfill the requirements of the assignment.

The D journal (60-69) has less than the required number of entries. Entries are sketchy and unimaginative. The vocabulary is lifeless and the ideas unclear. The D journal is sloppy though not a total failure. The D journal is poor.

English 2336 (Personal Memoir)

Class Presentation Sign-Up Sheet

1. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845)

2. Elie Wiesel, *Night* (1960)

3. Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior* (1976)

4. Isabel Allende, *Paula* (1994)

5. Mark Doty, *Firebird* (1999)

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. Marsha Recknagel, *If Nights Could Talk* (2001)

English 2336 General Ideas for Weekly Calendar (Specific Sample Follows)

WEEK	MATERIAL TO BE COVERED
1/16	Introduction to course. Discussion: the tradition of personal memoir. Class decisions about options, including choosing book-length memoir for the collaborative class presentation. Handout memoir samples. St. Augustine's *Confessions*.
1/21	Martin Luther King Holiday.
1/23	Discussion handout memoir samples: Tan, "My Mother." Frank McCourt, from *Angela's Ashes*. Introduction to the earliest memoir. (Text, 2-8, 491-502) Emily Dickinson, James McConkey, and excerpts from St. Augustine's *Confessions* (This memoir dates from 397 a.d.)
1/28	Other historical memoirs. Jean Jacques Rousseau, Confessions (1762), handout. Harriet Jacobs, handout, "The Lover" (from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, 1861).
1/30	Personal narrative and nature/science. Loren Eiseley, text, 115-121, "The Brown Wasps." Mary Oliver, handout, "Swoon." Annie Dillard, handout from *An American Childhood*.
2/4	Lewis Thomas, from *The Lives of a Cell: Notes of a Biology Watcher*, text, 34-41.
2/6	Personal narrative, culture, family, and identity. Text, 226-243 (Langston Hughes, James McConkey, and N. Scott Momaday, from *The Names*).
2/11	Text, 243-265. "James Baldwin, Stranger in the Village." Maya Angelou, from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.
2/13	Text, 274-286. Maxine Hong Kingston, from *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*.
2/18	President's Day (Holiday)
2/20	Text, 286-299. Richard Rodriguez, from *Hunger of Memory*.

2/25	Handout, Gabriel Garcia Marquez.
2/27	Personal narrative and psychology (understanding of learning, memory, stages of life). James McConkey, William Wordsworth, Virginia Wolf, text, 311-328).
3/4	Wolff, continued. "22 Hyde Park Gate" (handout). Fyodor Dostoevsky, "Peasant Marey," text, 349-354.
3/6	Text, 329-342. Vladimir Nabokov, from *Speak, Memory*. Tobias Wolff, from *This Boy's Life*.
3/11	Text, 424-431, McConkey, Yeats, M. F. K. Fisher (from *To Begin Again: Stories and Memoirs, 1908-1929*). Handout, William Maxwell, "Nearing 90."
3/13	Workshop, Collaborative Presentations

[3/18-3/24—Spring Break]

3/25	Collaborative Presentations or Whole-Class Study of Book-Length Memoir.
3/27	Collaborative Presentations or Whole-Class Study of Book-Length Memoir.
4/1	Collaborative Presentations or Whole-Class Study of Book-Length Memoir.
4/3	Collaborative Presentations or Whole-Class Study of Book-Length Memoir.
4/8	Memory and Creativity. Patricia Hampl, "Memory and Imagination," text, 201-211. Text, 122-125, Yeats and McConkey.
4/10	Proust
4/15	Morrison
4/17	Memoir and Poetry, handouts
4/22	Memoir and Fiction, handouts
4/24	Memoir and Drama, handouts
4/29	Beyond Memory, text, pages TBA.
5/1	Journals, sharing I
5/6	9:00 a.m. Final Exam (Journals, sharing II)

Update English 2336 PM Orman Calendar
(including assignments and reflecting class choices)

DATE	MATERIAL TO BE COVERED
1/16	Introduction to course. Discussion: the tradition of personal memoir. Class decisions about options, including choosing book-length memoir for the collaborative class presentation. Handout memoir samples.
	St. Augustine's *Confessions*.
1/21	Martin Luther King Holiday.
1/23	Discussion handout memoir samples: Tan, "My Mother." Frank McCourt, from *Angela's Ashes*. Introduction to the earliest memoir. (Text, 2-8, 491-502) Emily Dickinson, James McConkey, and excerpts from St. Augustine's *Confessions* (This memoir dates from 397 a.d.)
1/28	Other historical memoirs. Jean Jacques Rousseau, Confessions (1762), handout. Harriet Jacobs, handout from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, 1861).
1/30	Personal narrative and nature/science. Loren Eiseley, text, 115-121, "The Brown Wasps." Mary Oliver, handout, "Swoon." Annie Dillard, handout from *An American Childhood*.
2/4	Lewis Thomas, from *The Lives of a Cell: Notes of a Biology Watcher*, text, 34-41.
2/6	**Essay #1 due (Personal Narrative #1).** Personal narrative, culture, family, and identity. Text, 226-243 (Langston Hughes, James McConkey, and N. Scott Momaday, from *The Names*).
2/11	Text, 243-265. "James Baldwin, Stranger in the Village." Maya Angelou, from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.
2/13	Text, 274-286. Maxine Hong Kingston, from *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*.
2/18	President's Day (Holiday)
2/20	**Essay #2 due (Analysis Essay #1).** Text, 286-299. Richard Rodriguez, from *Hunger of Memory*.
2/25	Handout, Gabriel Garcia Marquez.
2/27	Personal narrative and psychology (understanding of learning, memory, stages of life). James McConkey, William Wordsworth, Virginia Wolff, text, 311-328).

3/4	Wolff, continued. "22 Hyde Park Gate" (handout). Fyodor Dostoevsky, "Peasant Marey," text, 349-354.
3/6	Text, 329-342. Vladimir Nabokov, from *Speak, Memory*. Tobias Wolff, from *This Boy's Life*.
3/11	Text, 424-431, McConkey, Yeats, M. F. K. Fisher (from *To Begin Again: Stories and Memoirs, 1908-1929*). Handout, William Maxwell, "Nearing 90."
3/13	**Essay #3 due (Personal Narrative #2).** Workshop, Journals & Collaborative Presentations
[3/15, noon	**Journals due for check.]**

[3/18-3/24—Spring Break]

3/25	Whole-Class Study of Book-Length Memoir, Marsha Recknagel's *If Nights Could Talk*.
3/27	*If Nights Could Talk*.
4/1	*If Nights Could Talk*.
4/3	*If Nights Could Talk*
4/8	**Essay #4 due. Analysis of *If Nights Could Talk*, including research elements.** Memory and Creativity. Patricia Hampl, "Memory and Imagination," text, 201-211. Text, 122-125, Yeats and McConkey.
4/10	Memoir and Drama, handout.
4/15	**Class presentations: Douglass & Kingston.**
4/17	**Class presentations: Wiesel & Doty.**
4/22	Memoir & Fiction, Proust, text 190-200.
4/24	Memoir and Poetry, text tba and handouts.
4/29	Journals, sharing 1.
5/1	Journals, sharing 2. **Turn in your completed journal.**
5/6	9:00 a.m. Final Exam

HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
Learning College Initiatives

CELEBRATING THE COMMON BOOK

Fostering a Sense of Community

Educational Conference November 9, 2001

To Kill a Mockingbird

By Harper Lee

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EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Learning College Initiatives

HCCS Strategic Plan 2000 – 2003 Goal Number Three:
Develop and Maintain Outstanding Educational Programs

HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

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Program

Welcome — *Dr. Charles Cook, Vice Chancellor Educational Development*

Vocal Performance — *HCC- Northwest College Choir*
Dr. Allyson Applebaum, Choir Director

Student Presentation — *Phi Theta Kappa*
Dr. Gisela Ables, Head Faculty Advisor

Student Presentation — *Psi Beta*
Dr. Joanne Hsu & Mrs. Linda Whitney
Faculty Advisors

Interdisciplinary Panel Discussion

2002 Common Book Nominations

Announcements / Adjournment

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HCC-Northwest Choir Performance

Musical Reflections on Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird

Choir Director:

Dr. Allyson Applebaum

Singers:

Trinity Cousten, Nelse A. Davis, Ehren Ernst, Andrew Gordon, Willard E. Kemp, Patricia Mendoza, Edgar Monsalvo, Mariela Moyano, Marty Oliver, Eric Wolfram, Traci Woods

Reader:

Cassandra Tyson

Accompanist:

Chris Schaffer (Chair, Fine Arts Dept., HCC-NW)

Hymns:

"When They Ring the Golden Bells" *Dion De Marbelle, 1887*

"On Jordan's Stormy Banks" *from Southern Harmony, 1835*

Adapted by R.M. McIntosh, arranged by Allyson Applebaum

A Poem:

"Daybreak in Alabama" *Langston Hughes (1902-1967)*

Background music by Allyson Applebaum

A Speech:

"I have seen the promised land" *Martin Luther King, Jr., 1968*

A Hymn:

"Precious Lord, Take My Hand"

George N. Allen (1812-1877)

Adapted by Thomas Dorsey, Arranged by Roy Ringwald

Soloist:

Traci Woods

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Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society Presentation

Stacey Palmer-Levine – President
Cindy Allen - Vice President of Service
Silvia Mintz - Vice President of Fellowship
Roberto Reynaga - Vice President of Scholarship

Psi Beta Honor Society Presentation
A Social-Psychological Interpretation

Panel Moderator:

Milton "Chip" Kaiser

Panel Members:

Valeri Cavazos
Karen Holmes
Barbara Martin
Teresa Serna

Interdisciplinary Panel Discussion

Panel Members:

Dr. Allyson Applebaum – Music Discipline
Dr. Patrice Evans – History Discipline
Dr. Donald Green – Psychology Discipline
Ms. Helen Orman – English Discipline
Dr. Maria Straus – Psychology Discipline
Coordinator, Learning College Initiatives
Mr. Alex Warren – Workforce Programs
President, Faculty Association

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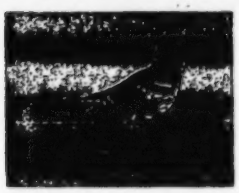
Symbolism of the Mockingbird

When he gave us our air-rifles Atticus wouldn't teach us to shoot. Uncle Jack instructed us in the rudiments thereof; he said Atticus wasn't interested in guns. Atticus said to Jem one day, "I'd rather you shot at tin cans in the back year, but I know you'll go after birds. Shoot all the bluejays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird."

That's the only time I ever heard Atticus say it was a sin to do something, and I asked Miss Maudie about it.

"Your father's right," she said. "Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat up people's gardens, don't nest in corncribs, they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us. That's why it's a sin to kill a mockingbird." (The mockingbird closely associated with Boo Radley and Tom Robinson represents joy and innocence.)



The Mockingbird

The song of the mockingbird is, in fact, a medley of the calls of many other birds. Each imitation is repeated two or three times, then another song is started, all in rapid succession. It is common for an individual bird to have as many as 25-30 songs in its repertory. The mockingbird, the state bird of Texas, is also known as a fierce protector of its nest and environment. It is sometimes seen swooping down upon a dog, cat or predator that may be venturing too close to the bird's protected territory. The mimus polyglottos, as the mockingbird is known scientifically, is about 10 inches in length, including its relatively long tail. It has a light gray coat and a whitish underside. Its wings and tail are darker gray with white patches.

Translations of *To Kill a Mockingbird*

- **Czech** Jakozabit ptacka Marcela Maskova & Igor Hajak, Praha:SNKLU, 300
- **Danish** Draeb ikke en sangfugl Michael Tejn, Kobenhaun:Jespersen og Pio, 1963, 334
- **Dutch** Spaar de Sportvogels Amsterdam:Amsterdam Boek, 1970
- **Estonian** Tappa laulurastast. V. Raud, Tallin: Eesti raamat, 1964, 318
- **Finnish** Kuin surmaisi satakielen Maija Westerlund, Jyvaskyla:K.J. Gummerus, 1962, 374
- **French** Quand meurt leRossignol Germaine Berand, Paris:Le livre contemporain, 1961, 316
- **German** Wer die Nachtigall Stoert Claire Malignon, Reinbek:Rowohlt, 1963, 375
- **Hebrew** Al tigga ba-zamir Z. Arda, Tel-Aviv:Am Oved, 1964, 278
- **Hungarian** Ne bantsatok a Feketerigot! ElekMathe, Budapest:Magveto Kiado, 1965, 347
- **Italian** il Buio Olfre la Siepe
- **Korean** Aideulmani algoitda Byeong-Jo Jeong, Seoul:Hwimun Chulpansa, 1965
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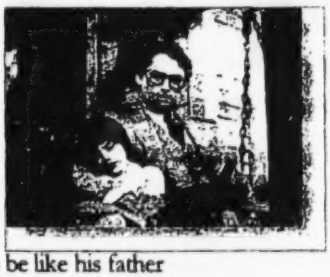
Characters

The characters in To Kill A Mockingbird are one of the most enjoyable aspects of the novel. The richness of the characters that Lee creates (many believe she patterned Scout after herself as a child) provides the essence of the story. Below is a list of the major characters:



1. Jean Louise (Scout) Finch - precocious eight-year-old narrator; tomboy >>
2. Atticus Finch - father of Scout and Jem; lawyer with a lot of wisdom >>
3. Jeremy Atticus (Jem) Finch - Scout's older brother who aspires to be like his father
4. Charles Baker (Dill) Harris - summertime friend of Scout and Jem
5. Aunt Alexandra - Atticus' sister who is enlisted to help raise the children
6. Uncle Jack - Atticus' brother; relates well to the children
7. Arthur (Boo) Radley - reclusive neighbor of the Finches; a mysterious figure to Scout, Jem and Dill
8. Calpurnia - housekeeper, cook, and mother figure to the Finches
9. Miss Maudie - neighbor of the Finches; relates well to the children
10. Tom Robinson - man whom Atticus is defending; accused of raping Mayella Ewell
11. Bob Ewell - father of Mayella; unemployed drunkard
12. Mayella Ewell - daughter of Bob; accuses Tom Robinson of rape
13. Heck Tate - Sheriff of Maycomb

Harper Lee made a gift of her father's watch to Gregory Peck, the actor who so subtly animated her artistic vision. Peck (pictured to the left in a scene from the movie version of Lee's novel) held on to the watch as he stood onstage and accepted the Academy Award for Best Actor. One of the first people he thanked was Harper Lee.

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Nominations for the 2002 Common Book

Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahiri. Lahiri offers a collection of short stories on marriages (arranged, rushed into, betrayed, invaded, and exhausted) with characters who move between the Indian subcontinent and the United States. They date, vacation, emigrate and work across cultural and national borders. Lahiri's well-constructed plots and characters offer the reader insight into the ways that human affections both sustain and defy the cultural forms that try to enclose them.

The Tao Te Ching by Lao-Tzu (translated by Stephen Mitchell). The Tao Te Ching, or Book of the Way, is the classic manual on the art of living. Written over 2,500 years ago, the Tao Te Ching looks at the basic predicament of being alive and gives advice that imparts balance and perspective, a serene and generous spirit. This book is about wisdom in action. It teaches how to work for the good with the effortless skill that comes from being in accord with the Tao (the basic principle of the universe) and applies equally to good government, love, child rearing, business, and ecology.

Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions Among the Converted Peoples by V. S. Naipaul. The winner of this year's Nobel Prize for Literature, Naipaul retraces a journey he first took in 1979 through Indonesia, Iran, Pakistan and Malaya. Then he was trying to understand the fundamentalism that seemed to be sweeping the region. Today, he is asking what happens when fundamentalism fails and when its dreams of purity encounter global economic change. Naipaul's book is one of stories, not of argument.

If Nights Could Talk by Marsha Recknagel. A creative writing teacher at Rice University, Recknagel begins this family memoir with the arrival on her doorstep of her 16-year-old nephew, an emotional and physical wreck. He is the catalyst of an engaging reexamination of what they have both endured in their lives and how they went about redirecting those lives. Filled with references to Houston and a few to HCCS, this is a book about families, about love and meanness, about evil and redemption.

Longitude by Dava Sobel. The thorniest scientific problem of the eighteenth century was how to determine longitude. Many thousands of lives had been lost at sea over the centuries due to the inability to determine an east-west position. This is the engrossing story of the clockmaker, John Harrison, who solved the problem that Newton and Galileo had failed to conquer, yet claimed only half the promised rich reward. The author launches us through the tumult of history and science as merchants, monarchs and mariners wrestle with measuring longitude.

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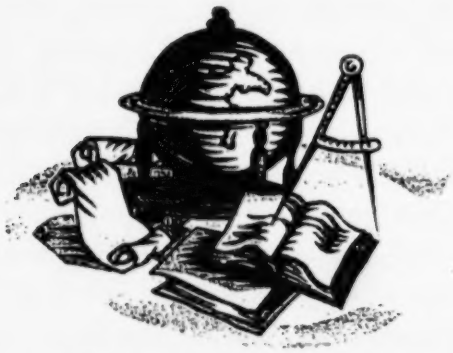

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